

Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Eric Jordan Staves for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

#### HONORING THE WESTERN WAYNE YOUTH TRAVELING CLASSIC

SPEECH OF

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 22, 2008*

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge the Western Wayne Youth Traveling Classic (WWYTC) League, upon the 25th anniversary of its establishment.

Now celebrating its 25th year, the Western Wayne Traveling Classic is a junior bowling league. Since its inception, over one thousand young bowlers have been enriched by the program. Importantly, more than thirty thousand dollars in scholarships have been awarded to bowlers through the WWYTC, substantially contributing to the education opportunities of Detroit area youth. The WWYTC has become a beloved area institution of Canton, Westland, and the Wayne County area in general. Relationships are built and young people given activities that keep them occupied constructively. In the past quarter century, a marriage has resulted from young people meeting in league competition, and the first child of a first generation WWYTC youth has now become a member of the WWYTC. This league has produced world bowling hall of fame members like Lisa Bishop, and become a well-known fixture of the Wayne County area.

From 1983 to the present, its founder, Harold Winters has served as the Executive Director of the Western Wayne Youth Traveling Classic League. His initiative began a league which enabled youth in the area to compete, learn about sportsmanship, and constructively participate in their community. Before the league's founding in 1983, there were no classic bowling leagues in the Western Wayne County area. This league created an opportunity for young bowlers to learn the fundamentals of the sport and compete in a fun and family oriented environment.

Madam Speaker, over the years, the Western Wayne Youth Traveling Classic has been a beloved feature of the Wayne County area. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the spirit represented by this league, and the benefits it has brought to our community.

A TRIBUTE TO SAINT JOHN'S FOUNDATION BOARD TRUSTEE JERRY B. EPSTEIN AND HIS BELOVED WIFE, PAT, FOR THEIR MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my dear friends, Jerry B. Epstein and his remarkable wife, Pat, who are being honored on October 11 with the Spirit of Saint John's Award at the 2008 Caritas Gala at the Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills, California.

To fully capture the breadth of this extraordinary couple's service to Saint John's and the community at large, I would like to share with my colleagues a tribute written by members of the Saint John's Health Center Foundation family. As a person who has had the privilege of knowing this remarkable couple for many years, I feel the tribute captures Jerry and Pat's tireless work to make Saint John's the quality health center it is today. It also highlights their many other contributions to the Los Angeles community they hold so dear.

The foundation's tribute reads, "Pat and Jerry's love for Saint John's is apparent in the enthusiasm and passion they bring to each project they embrace. When asked why they have chosen to devote so much of their time and energy to the Health Center, Jerry will tell you that having a place like Saint John's is absolutely essential—"as important as having food to eat and a roof over your head."

Jerry joined the Saint John's Foundation Board of Trustees in 1975 and was elected Chairman in 2006 and 2007. He has actively participated in numerous hospital and Foundation initiatives including leadership of the Development Oversight Committee, Building Committee, Leadership Giving, Jimmy Stewart Relay Marathon Committee, Chautauqua Inaugural Committee, The Saint John's Legacy Project and the Campaign for Saint John's. He currently serves as a member of the Foundation Executive Committee and Board of Counselors. During the design and construction of the new Health Center campus, Jerry's vast knowledge and experience in large-scale real estate development have been invaluable to Saint John's.

Jerry's commitment to Saint John's is matched by his wife and 60-year life-long partner, Pat, whose contributions have touched everyone in the Saint John's family. As one of the founding members of the Irene Dunne Guild, she continues to be an integral part of this important support group. She is a committee member of the Women's Health Initiative and serves on several fundraising event committees. Pat has graciously hosted countless dinners and special events in their home to introduce friends and neighbors to Saint John's.

The Epsteins' dedication to Saint John's is rivaled only by their pride for the State of California. Jerry is a true real estate visionary and since 1952 has been involved in the development, construction and management of major building projects in Los Angeles. One of the highlights of his extremely successful career in real estate is the development of Marina del

Rey, the largest pleasure boat harbor community in the world.

Jerry's leadership in civic affairs extends to all sectors of the community and he has proudly served every California governor since Ronald Reagan on State boards and commissions, including the California Transportation Commission and California High Speed Rail Authority, City of Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners and Los Angeles State Building Authority, all of which he served as president.

A dedicated student of history, Jerry collects memorabilia associated with the Founding Fathers and other great American statesmen. He is perhaps most proud of the collection he recently donated to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which included an original copy of the Declaration of Independence, plus documents and letters signed by every signatory of the Declaration, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Hancock.

Pat and Jerry's energy is boundless when it comes to making a difference in their community. Jerry serves on the board of directors of The Jewish Federation of Los Angeles and a three-person committee overseeing the construction of the new L.A. County USC and Harbor UCLA Medical Centers. Pat is an officer of the Beverly Hills Hadassah and a member of the Governing Board of FIDM/The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, one of the largest institutions of its kind in the Nation. A gifted artist, sculptor and collector, Pat is also a member of the city's artistic community and is passionate about the time she spends in her studio, Studio Eight, sculpting in different mediums.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Pat and Jerry for their generosity, dedication and love for Saint John's Health Center, the greater Los Angeles region and the State of California. They have given selflessly of their time, creativity, talent and financial resources to many important causes and it is with great pride that I join Saint John's in recognizing them for their significant and ongoing contributions to our communities.

CONGRATULATIONS ON TAIWAN  
NATIONAL DAY, OCTOBER 10TH  
2008

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I congratulate Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou and Ambassador Jason Yuan on Republic of China's National Day on October 10th, 2008. The Taiwanese people have every reason to be proud of their freedom, their full-fledged democracy and their economic wellbeing. The people have the best schools, health facilities and a first rate transit system throughout the island. The Taiwanese standard of living has long been the envy of much of the world.

In addition, Taiwan is a peace loving nation. It is friendly with all free nations and maintains superb economic and political relationship with the United States. Hopefully, it will soon work out a way to live in harmony with the Chinese mainland. The ROC President Ma Ying-jeou

has repeatedly said he seeks dialogues with China and put aside the disputes, in order to win peace and prosperity over the Taiwan Straits.

Taiwan is blessed. May blessings continue to favor Taiwan and its good people.

# RECOGNIZING NASTIA LIUKIN 2008 OLYMPIC GYMNAST

## HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor Miss Nastia Liukin of Parker, Texas, in the Fourth Congressional District of Texas, as the most decorated U.S. gymnast from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Anastasia "Nastia" Liukin was born to Anna and Valeri Liukin on October 30, 1989 in Moscow, Russia. When she was two and a half years old, her parents decided to move from Russia to the USA. As the daughter of two gymnasts, it was only natural that Nastia found herself in the gym early on. Since the age of six, she has been coached by her father at the World Olympic Gymnastics Academy, her family's gymnastics club in Plano, Texas. Through hard work, diligence and dedication to the sport, Nastia has become a Senior International Elite Gymnast, is a four time World Champion, nine time World medalist, four time U.S. National Champion and has won multiple Pacific Rim and American Cup titles. In 2005 she was also named the Gymnast of the Year by the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame and was a nominee in both the World Top 10 Athletes Award and the U.S. Sport's Academy Athlete of the Year Award.

As a star member of the 2008 Olympic Team, Nastia became the 2008 Olympic All-Around Gold Medalist and received silver medals for her performances on the balance beam, uneven bars and in the overall team competition, as well as a bronze medal in floor exercise. With nine World Championship medals and five Olympic medals, Nastia joins the ranks of Mary Lou Retton and Shannon Miller as being the American gymnast having won the most World Championship medals, as well as the most medals in a single Olympic Games.

Nastia has not limited her successes to only the gym. In January of 2008, she was accepted to Southern Methodist University in Dallas in hopes of pursuing a career in international business or acting. However, after trying to juggle her training and academic commitments, Nastia decided to put college on hold until after the Beijing Summer Olympic Games.

Madam Speaker, Americans take pride in Nastia's athletic accomplishments and her commitment to academic enrichment. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this young golden girl, Miss Nastia Liukin.

# IN CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE BRIDGES AT DEVIL'S SLIDE

## HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, this week marks a milestone in a half century long journey to provide safe and scenic passage along the beautiful San Mateo County coastline and honors the tireless dedication of my predecessor in Congress, Representative Tom Lantos.

On Friday, September 26, 2008, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), along with project contractors, citizens and elected officials, will officially unveil two newly-constructed bridges at Devil's Slide on State Route One.

These bridges are part of a larger project which will connect them to twin four thousand, two hundred foot tunnels. Together, the bridges and tunnels will bypass a historically-dangerous stretch of Route One that over the past twenty-five years has seen three closures and reconstructions due to erosion of the cliff upon which the road sits.

The existing roadway between the cities of Pacifica and Half Moon Bay was first opened in 1935. By 1958, local citizens were clamoring for a safer road, but environmental, financial, geological and land-use issues complicated the process until 1996, when San Mateo County voters passed Measure T by 76 percent, authorizing the bridge and tunnel construction. The project, though, would have been impossible were it not for the passionate work here in the House of Representatives by the late Congressman Lantos, who was present last year as crews broke ground for the tunnels' construction.

In honor of his invaluable efforts, the California State Legislature passed a resolution in July 2008 to name the tunnels the "Tom Lantos Tunnels at Devil's Slide."

Since breaking ground, significant progress has been made on this ambitious and environmentally sensitive project. Along with the completion of the two bridges, crews have excavated a combined two thousand six hundred feet in the northbound and southbound bores of the tunnels. With specialized equipment, leading edge technology and carefully designed and engineered plans, crews work twenty-four hours a day on the tunnels which will eventually connect with the newly-constructed bridges. The resulting road of just over a mile will realign Route One into a safer, more reliable passage around Devil's Slide.

Madam Speaker, Tom Lantos' legacy in this chamber is well-known. With the opening of this important north-south roadway along one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline in this or any country, his work will be memorialized for residents of our district and passing motorists for generations to come.

# TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR STEPHEN D. BLAKE

## HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake who became the second command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Sustainment Command on June 19th, 2008 at ASC headquarters at Rock Island IL. CSM Blake serves as primary advisor to the ASC Commanding General on all matters pertaining to enlisted personnel assigned to the Command, particularly in areas related to their training and development and to the quality of life and well-being of soldiers and their families. He also responds to the concerns of civilian and contractor employees of the Command.

During his career of 26 years of distinguished service in the United States Army Command Sergeant Major Blake has served in a number of key enlisted leadership positions. He has had tours of duty in Germany and Korea as well as combat tours in Southwest Asia during both Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and a tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2003, Blake graduated from class 53 of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. His military training included the Air Assault School, Primary Leadership Development Course, and First Sergeants Course. He was named the distinguished graduate from his class in both the Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Courses. He also holds an Associates Degree in Business Management from Excelsior College.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake developed SOP, using the Center for Army Lessons Learned Web site to gather the most recent tactics, techniques, and procedures used by units operating in Iraq. The SOP difficulty and intensity of the training was a confidence builder for Operation Iraqi Freedom for veterans and new soldiers alike.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (three awards); the Legion of Merit; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards); the Army Commendation Medal (nine awards); the Army Achievement Medal (nine awards); the Good Conduct Medal (eight awards); the National Defense Service Medal with Star; the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three stars; the Iraq, Afghanistan, Global War on Terrorism and Korean Defense service Medals; the NCO Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral Four; the Army Service Ribbon; the Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral Three; the NATO Medal; Kuwait Liberation Medals from the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; the Air Assault Badge; and three Meritorious Unit Commendations. He is also a recipient of the Ordnance Order of Samuel Sharpe.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake is a native of Tyler Mountain, WV. Blake and his wife, Karen Marie Riley of Ohio, are the parents of two children, Amber and Joshua.